

SAF/LLZ (Legislative Research Team)

CUMMINGS, Elijah (Democrat)
Representative, 7th District, Maryland
Elected 16Apr96 to 104th Congress
Reelected to succeeding Congresses



BACKGROUND

Born: Baltimore, Maryland - 18 January 1951

Home: Baltimore, Maryland

Marital status: Separated - 3 children

Religion: Baptist

Education: Howard Univ, BA, 1973; Univ of Maryland, JD, 1976

Military: None

Profession: Attorney

Political: Maryland legislature, 1983-96; speaker pro tem, 1995-96. Elected in a special election on 16Apr96, winning 81% of the vote, to fill the seat of Kweisi Mfume (D) who resigned 15Feb96 to become president of the NAACP. Reelected in 1998 with 86%, in 2000 with 87% and in 2002 with 74% of the vote.

Rep Cummings pursues an agenda similar to that of his predecessor, Kweisi Mfume, emphasizing jobs, welfare, and crime issues. He is low-key, supports affirmative action and economic development programs for Baltimore. Considers himself a consensus builder. While in the Maryland legislature, was praised for his welfare reform legislation.

In the 106th Congress, opposed a proposed \$800B tax cut that he said would result in cuts to veterans, education, and defense funding. Focuses on Federal employee issues of pay, health insurance, and retirement benefits. Offered successful amdt to increase NASA university research center funding by \$2.8 million and decreasing Human Space Flight funding accordingly. Supported the establishment of a program under which long-term care insurance is made available to Federal employees, active duty military, and civilian and military retirees.

In the 107th Congress, signed a letter to the President expressing strong support for maintaining federal employee pay and benefits. Cautioned that efforts to improve homeland security and to counter terrorist threats should not be done at the expense of civil rights and liberties. Was one of four House members forced to vacate their offices in Longworth House Office Bldg in October 01 after contamination resulting from anthrax mail. Strongly opposed the October 02 war powers resolution giving President Bush the authority to use US military force against Iraq.

At the beginning of the 108th Congress became president of the Congressional Black Caucus.

AF Bases: AF Plant 50 (Kaiser)

COMMITTEES

GOVERNMENT REFORM -- Subcs on: Criminal Justice, Drug Policy & HR – Ranking; Civil Service, Census and Agency Organization

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE – Subcs on: Highways and Transit; Railroads